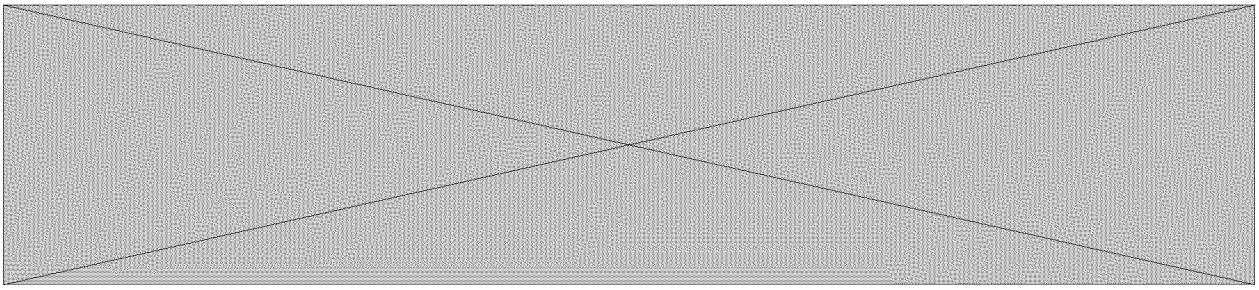
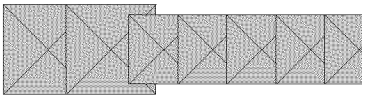
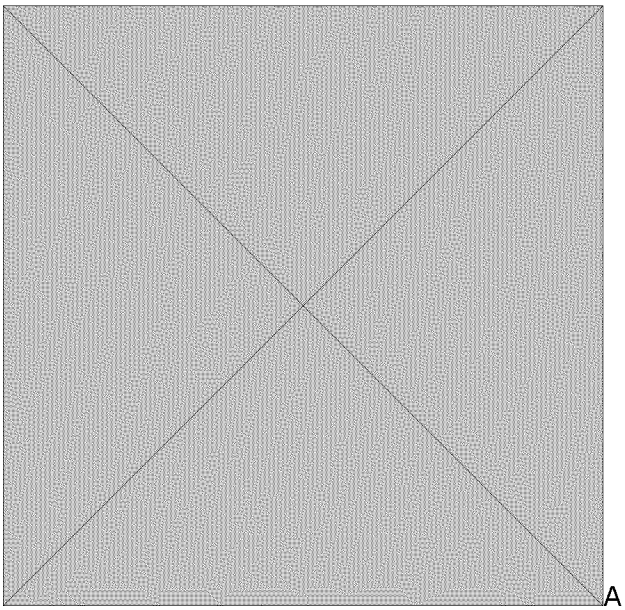
**To:** Smith, DavidW[Smith.DavidW@epa.gov]
**From:** bioactivist=biologicaldiversity.org@mail.salsalabs.net
**Sent:** Thur 1/15/2015 6:02:12 PM
**Subject:** Endangered Earth: Mexican Wolves Get More Room But Less Refuge



**No. 757, Jan. 15, 2015**



## New Federal Rule Makes It Easier to Kill Mexican Gray Wolves



A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule issued Monday caps the number of Mexican gray wolves in Arizona and New Mexico at 325, bans them north of Interstate 40, and eases the path for private parties and government agents to kill them. Although the rule expands the animals' room to roam and allows releases of captive-bred wolves into New Mexico for the first time -- which could help alleviate inbreeding -- the other provisions will damage the lobo's long-term recovery.

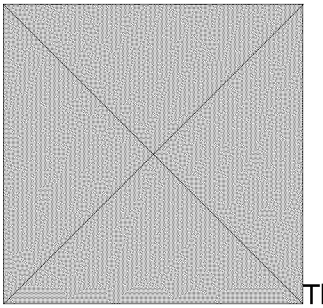
The agency announced a second rule Monday that protects Mexican wolves as a subspecies separate from other wolves, entitling them to their own recovery plan. Both new rules stemmed from petitions and lawsuits filed by the Center for Biological Diversity.

"The Mexican gray wolf recovery program has been hamstrung from the start, and this new management rule doesn't go nearly far enough to fix the problem," said the Center's Michael Robinson. "Capping the population and keeping them out of the Grand Canyon and northern New Mexico will keep the lobo on the brink of extinction."

We'll be fighting back against those bad provisions. Stay tuned for how you can help.

Read more in our press release.

**Lawsuit: Government Must Disclose Extent of Gulf of Mexico Fracking**



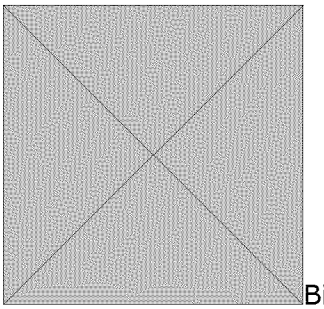
The Center just sued the federal government for failing to release public documents revealing the extent and risks of offshore fracking in the Gulf of Mexico. Our suit, under the Freedom of Information Act, argues that the feds -- namely, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement -- must disclose permits, reports, emails and other documents related to its approval for oil and gas companies to frack offshore wells in the Gulf.

Offshore fracking blasts water and industrial chemicals into the seafloor, posing a toxic threat to sea turtles and other marine wildlife and the fragile ocean ecosystems where they live.

"The public has a right to know where, when and how much fracking the federal government is allowing in the Gulf of Mexico," said the Center's Kristen Monsell.

Get more from ABC News.

**Keystone Pipeline Being Pushed Through Congress -- *Take Action***

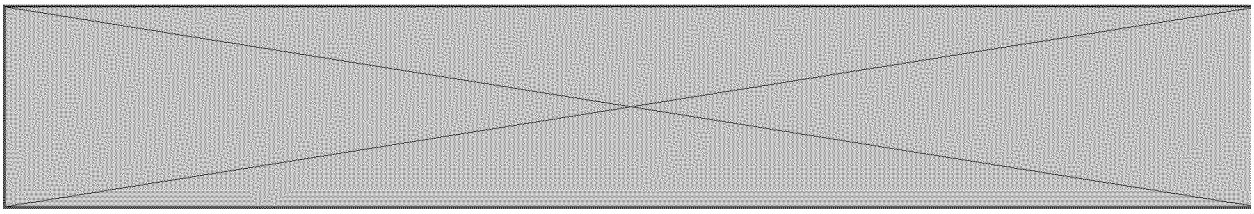


Big Oil's cronies are trying to ram a bill through Congress forcing approval of the dirty and dangerous Keystone XL pipeline. The project would exacerbate the climate crisis, raise the risk of oil spills and put endangered species in harm's way -- including whooping cranes, black-footed ferrets, piping plovers, sage grouse and American burying beetles.

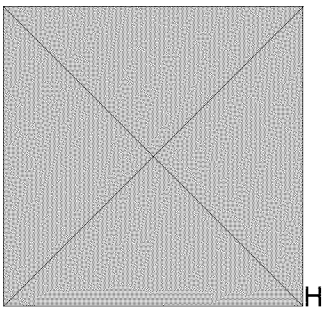
It's time for President Obama to stop this pipeline once and for all.

Last week the president pledged to veto the Keystone bill, but Republicans in Congress will no doubt continue pushing this pipe dream instead of focusing on real solutions that advance a clean-energy economy.

Take action and tell the president to reject the Keystone XL pipeline now.



**Surprising Sign: California Condor Chick Born in the Wild**

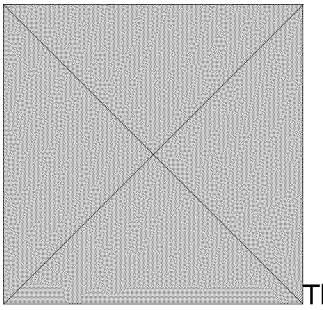
 Here's something cool: Unbeknownst to wildlife experts, somewhere deep in central California's Ventana Wilderness, two adult California condors successfully mated and reared a chick -- *without anyone noticing*. The newly discovered, untagged juvenile was reported by biologists with the Ventana Wildlife Society as a welcome oversight; it suggests these condors may finally be gaining independence.

By 1987 California condor numbers had plummeted to an all-time low of just 27 individuals. But after years of captive breeding and reintroduction to the wild, these largest of North American birds have begun to rebound. Today their numbers are estimated at 425, with 219 of these living wild in California, Utah, Arizona and Mexico.

This is the third time since 1997 that a condor hatching has been missed. May there be many more hatchings to come.

Get more at Discovery News.

**Study: Hellbenders Threatened by Deadly Disease**

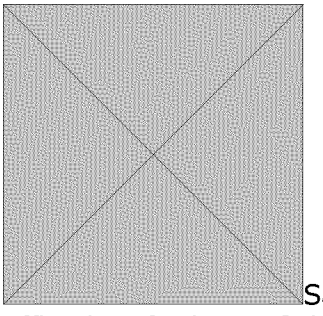
 The hellbender, North America's largest salamander, faces a long list of threats to its survival, including water pollution as well as capture and collection. And now there's concrete proof of one more: a disease caused by a chytrid fungus, which affects amphibians across the country. A new study finds this chytrid fungus is widespread in western North Carolina waterways, infecting more than 25 percent of hellbenders in the region.

The study was spurred by the imperiled status of the hellbender, whose populations are in sharp decline across the eastern United States. In response to a Center petition, in 2011 the Fish and Wildlife Service found that eastern hellbenders might warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act. But after the agency failed to make a final decision within one year, as the Act requires, we sued -- and in 2013 we reached a settlement requiring a protection decision in 2018.

The recent evidence of this disease in North Carolina makes it all the more important that these incredible salamanders get the protection they need.

Read more in our press release.

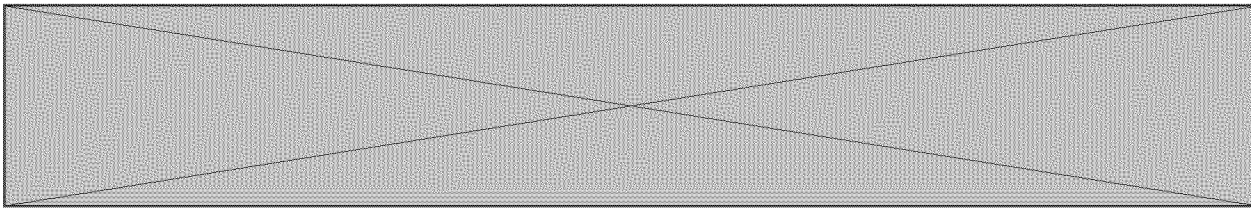
**Opposition Grows to California Crude-by-rail Project**

 San Jose is the latest city to oppose the proposed Phillips 66 oil train offloading facility in California's San Luis Obispo County. The city council on Tuesday voted unanimously to send a letter to county planners expressing serious concerns about the project's dangers. If the facility is built, it would bring mile-long oil trains carrying 2.5 million gallons of crude nearly every day through densely populated areas, including San Jose.

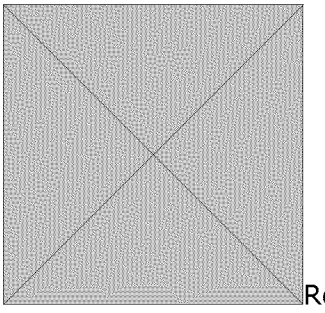
More than 22,000 people from across the state have already spoken out against the facility, along with city governments like Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond and Davis.

"The Phillips 66 rail project is a disaster waiting to happen," said the Center's Valerie Love. "It's heartening to see so many speaking out against this facility. It's clear that people recognize the danger of this plan and want it stopped in its tracks."

Read more in our press release.



**EPA Wants New Limits on Toxic Oil-spill Dispersants**



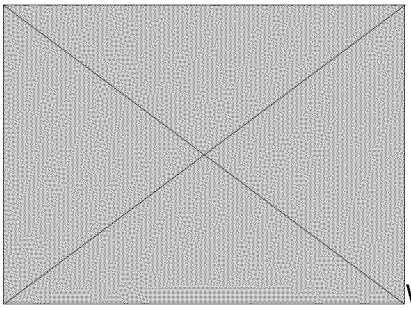
Remember those nasty chemicals they used to break up spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010? This week the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a series of important steps to protect people, wildlife and the environment from those toxic dispersants. The rules, if enacted, would place new limits on the use of dispersants and require better testing and monitoring of the safety and efficacy of these products.

More than 2 million gallons were used in the Deepwater Horizon response. Yet the effects of using such large quantities of dispersants and injecting them into very deep water, as BP did in the Gulf of Mexico, have never been studied; scientists believe the chemicals may be linked to the spread of underwater plumes of oil.

"Oil spills are bad, but often these dispersants make the problem worse, adding an extra layer of toxic chemicals that hurt wildlife and put people at risk," said our Oceans Director Miyoko Sakashita. "We're glad to see the EPA taking this problem seriously and pushing ahead with these changes."

Read more in our press release.

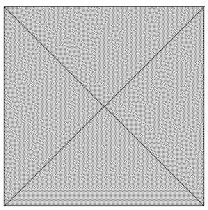
**Wild & Weird: Beautiful Gynandromorphy**

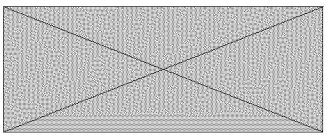
 While emptying out a butterfly pupa chamber in an exhibit at Drexel University in Philadelphia, a volunteer stumbled across a stunning and lovely example of diversity in nature: a common archduke butterfly with a right wing typical of females and a left wing characteristic of males.

According to *LiveScience*, the phenomenon is a rare "condition" called gynandromorphy whereby "the sex chromosomes fail to separate during cell division in early development."

But gender in the animal kingdom, as among humans, is a fluid spectrum of cultural and biological possibility. Describing this intriguing process as a "failure" of cell division says more about the observer than the observed. As with the random mutations that facilitate natural selection, it's nature's endless variability that gives us a rich, diverse and evolving world.

Read more at *LiveScience*.





Kierán Suckling

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Executive Director

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